

COMMUNITY VISIONING AND GOAL SETTING

Visioning Approach Over 45 Cluster stakeholders attended two visioning workshops to help define goals for the Cluster 5 reinvestment strategy. These workshops began with a presentation by the Technical Assistance Team to provide all participants with an overview of the Asset Profile, including a summary of the results of Focus Groups and Instrumented Group Interviews (conducted during the Data Gathering phase). Then stakeholders worked with Cluster Board and Technical Assistance Team members (acting as facilitators and recorders) to respond to a prepared Visioning Discussion Agenda in a 50-minute break out group covering one of six planning topics:

Workshop #1

- Neighborhood Commercial
- Housing
- Youth Development

Workshop #2

- Job Centers
- Transportation
- Environment

Participants in each breakout group had the opportunity to present their own vision statements as well as to respond to the prepared discussion agenda; all ideas were recorded on maps and flip chart sheets.

Each of the breakout groups summarized its findings for all Visioning participants. As the results of each group were reported, stakeholders from other breakout groups had an opportunity to ask questions and to have their vision ideas for that topic recorded on flip chart sheets. Then each participant voted for the ideas/visions under each topic heading which he or she felt were most important to the future of the Cluster.

Visioning Results

The visioning results are summarized below by planning topic.

Neighborhood Commercial

Stakeholders reviewed the neighborhood commercial reinvestment target areas identified earlier by Focus Group participants with reference to the results of the neighborhood commercial building condition survey. The previously identified reinvestment locations were generally endorsed. Stakeholders particularly endorsed the goal of capitalizing on Ambassador Bridge/international traffic in supporting additional commercial reinvestment in the Cluster. Stakeholders also suggested adding a commercial reinvestment location on Michigan Avenue in the area between Livernois and Scotten. The exact location of this new commercial development should be identified as part of a master plan for the improvement of the area to the northeast as a mixed use community. Stakeholders further suggested that the depth of the existing commercial strip zoning in this area be expanded to accommodate a commercial center with larger footprint users.

Stakeholders recognized that not all of the commercial strips in the Cluster would recover as viable commercial areas. In discussing potential re-use strategies, stakeholders suggested green space, professional offices, institutions/non-profit organizations and attractively landscaped parking to support adjacent commercial development.

Stakeholders supported the goal of establishing a Cluster-based business development organization (or consortium of existing organizations) to give residents a strong voice in planning and decision-making and to serve as a liaison with the City.

Housing

Stakeholders gave the highest priority to initiatives which would maintain the stability of intact neighborhoods and supported the goal of reinforcing ongoing/planned housing improvement initiatives that are showing evidence of success. Stakeholders suggested adding the "Block Club" area, where the Southwest Alliance for Neighborhoods (SWAN) and area banks are already working to upgrade housing conditions, as a housing reinvestment target area. Stakeholders also suggested adding the Core City Neighborhoods area.

Other high priority goals suggested by stakeholders included revising existing zoning to reduce conflicts between residential and non-residential uses; developing strategies for dealing more effectively with absentee owned rental properties and the negative impacts they often create; and neighborhood planning which encourages a mix of residential, retail, service and civic uses.

Youth Development

Stakeholders discussed several approaches to improving the quality of public school education, for example by giving teachers the tools/information needed to be more responsive to differences in ethnic and cultural background, holding teachers and school administrators more accountable for educational outcomes, and providing support programs to help parents help their children to succeed in school.

Stakeholders strongly endorsed the goal expanding the availability of youth job training programs and improving community awareness of programs which are already available. Increased funding, partnerships with business and industry to make apprenticeship/internship programs available and corporate participation in providing transportation to job and job training sites were suggested as priorities.

Stakeholders asked for increased responsiveness from the City to community and faith-based efforts to install donated recreational equipment and run recreational programs in city-owned parks and playgrounds.

Stakeholders also proposed devoting significantly greater resources to libraries as key institutions in youth development, education and neighborhood quality of life.

Job Centers

Stakeholders overwhelmingly endorsed the goal of establishing a skilled trades training center, registered with and approved by the U.S. Department of Labor in Cluster 5. Department of Labor certification was believed to be particularly important to ensure that training "graduates" would obtain journeymen cards as an essential "passport" to a good job. Stakeholders also suggested partnering with construction trades companies and housing development non-profits to

train residents in housing repair, rehab and construction skills. Stakeholders supported the goal of capitalizing on southwest Detroit's role as an international trade corridor and suggested that Cluster 5 encourage an increased number of import/export and trade brokering firms to move to (or start up in) the area. Stakeholders also endorsed the goal of establishing a Cluster-based business development organization to work with the City and existing area business/industry to bring new and expanded job opportunities to southwest Detroit.

Transportation

The two most important transportation-related reinvestment goals identified by Cluster 5 stakeholders were solving problems related to semi-trailer truck traffic in residential and neighborhood commercial areas and improving public transit service. Stakeholders felt that through truck routes and links between I-94 and I-75 should be designated and improved (with durable paving, wider turning radii, clear signage) and that the use of these designated routes by heavy trucks should be enforced. Stakeholders suggested low cost improvements to make public transit more appealing (improved, well lit and well maintained bus shelters), as well as suggesting that priority be given to improving service on major arterial streets linking downtown, Cluster 5 and suburban job locations.

Environment

Stakeholders overwhelmingly supported the goal of protecting and expanding green space and public access on Detroit's southwest riverfront and creating linkages to downtown. In addition, they suggested that new riverfront industry be limited to those uses which are water dependent (e.g., shipping). Other high priority environmental goals included air quality improvement, prohibiting the location or reactivating of waste injection wells on the riverfront and a zero-tolerance policy on illegal dumping.